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## International Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth: Statues of the International Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth

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# **Statutes of the International Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth**

## **IDENTITY**

1. The International Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth is the updated form of the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate which had its origin in the Apparitions of the Virgin Mary to St. Catherine Labouré in 1830.
2. The Association of the Children of Mary was approved by the Sovereign Pontiff Pope Pius IX in the rescripts dated 20 June 1847 and 19 July 1850, and was later confirmed by other decrees of the Holy See.
3. By virtue of the aforementioned rescripts the general direction of the Association falls to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity and to his legitimate successors as Superior General of the two Congregations.

## **SEAT**

4. The International Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth has as its historical center the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal in Paris, France, where the apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré took place. This chapel is a center for prayer and pilgrimage for the members of the Association.

The seat of the International Secretariat (described in Articles 21-23 below) is located in Madrid, Spain.

## **NATURE**

5. The Association is ECCLESIAL, LAY, MARIAN and VINCENTIAN
  - \* ECCLESIAL. The members of the Association commit themselves to live and work actively and responsibly in communion with the members of the Church and its pastors on the local and world level.
  - \* LAY. It is an Association mainly of young lay people, within the framework of Lay International Associations of the Faithful (cf. Canons 298-329).
  - \* MARIAN. The members of the Association commit themselves to the following of Christ. They discover Mary in the Gospel, as model of all

believers, accepting in faith the presence of God in her Son Jesus, listening to and acting on his word. Likewise, they see in Mary, Mother of the Lord, the inspiration that helps them, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk through life in faith and with an effective charity that generates justice.

\* VINCENTIAN. Through its birth in the Family of St. Vincent de Paul, it is inspired by the Vincentian charism and makes of evangelization and service of the poor distinctive characteristics of its presence in the Church. Its members commit themselves to be missionaries, witnessing to the love of Christ by word and work.

## **MEMBERS**

6. The Association is composed of young people and adults, with special attention to youth, according to the request of the Blessed Virgin. The members, single or married, endeavor to live their Marian spirituality, proper to the Association, to work apostolically within the Vincentian spirit, according to the pastoral plans and projects of the Association, and to observe their own statutes.
7. The International Association is made up of National, Regional, Diocesan and Local Associations.
8. The National Associations have their own proper statutes, in accordance with universal Canon Law and with the present International Statutes. The national statutes must be approved by the Director General.

## **END**

9. The contemplation of Christ and attention to the example of Mary shall be the driving force that will allow the Association to attain the following ends:
  - 1\_ to form the members to live a solid faith in the following of Jesus Christ, the Evangelizer of the poor;
  - 2\_ to live and pray like Mary in simplicity and humility assuming the spirituality of the Magnificat;
  - 3\_ to foster, animate and maintain the missionary spirit in the Association, especially through missionary experiences, in particular, among the poor and the young;
  - 4\_ to prepare the members of the Association individually and communally to collaborate in the Church and society with other pastoral workers,

according to the directives of the hierarchy of the universal and local Church.

## **ACT OF CONSECRATION**

10.       1\_     The Association offers to the youth the Consecration to Christ through Mary as a way of making explicit their baptismal consecration and to make of their life a total gift to God through service and evangelization of the poor, choosing Mary as Mother and model.
- 2\_     The Consecration to Christ through Mary will be the result of deep knowledge of the Association, of formation within the perspective of faith, and of a serious discernment in the Holy Spirit.

## **MEANS**

11.     In order to attain its objectives the Association puts at the disposition of its members all the means it judges convenient:
  - 1\_     it encourages the interiorization of the Word of God and celebrates it, valuing group prayer and the liturgy because Christ makes himself present in the word, in the Eucharist and in those who pray together;
  - 2\_     it offers a catechetical formation process for maturing in faith \_ a process of catechumenal inspiration which has its stages, its objectives and its activities;
  - 3\_     it makes known to the members what Holy Scripture and the Church say in regard to the Virgin;
  - 4\_     it promotes the knowledge of St. Vincent, St. Louise, St. Catherine and other witnesses of the Church who lived the Gospel in giving themselves to charity;
  - 5\_     it offers the members the possibility of serving the poor within their own countries and of acting in solidarity with others on an international level;
  - 6\_     it promotes sessions for holistic formation, catechetical schools, congresses, assemblies, publications and other means of pastoral and social communication.

## **GOVERNANCE**

## **I. International Level**

12. The Association is a lay Association in the Church. It is governed following the dispositions of universal Canon Law and its own proper statutes.
13. By virtue of a Pontifical concession, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity is the Director General of the Association.  
It falls on the Director General to:
  - 1\_ represent the Association in the International Organizations of the Church and with the International President at meetings of the laity;
  - 2\_ name the Sub-Director General and the General Councillor, after consultation with their respective General Councils;
  - 3\_ name the members of the International Secretariat after consultation with the International Council;
  - 4\_ confirm the nominations of the National Presidents, Directors, and Sister Councillors;
  - 5\_ erect national associations and approve their statutes;
  - 6\_ convoke, in exceptional cases, the International Council;
  - 7\_ depose the President, other members of the International Council and the International Secretariat in conformity with Canon 318, Article 2.
14. For its own dynamism and direction, the International Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth has, in addition to the Director General, a General Assembly, an International Council and an International Secretariat.

### **1\_ - The General Assembly**

15. At least every five years a General Assembly will be convoked with the participation of the International Council, the International Secretariat and two lay people from each National Association. Each National Association may also send its National Director and the Sister Advisor on the national level, who may participate in the discussions but without the right to vote.
16. *The objectives of the General Assembly are to:*

- 1\_ elect the International President and the lay members of the International Council, in conformity with Canon 119;
- 2\_ propose revisions of the statutes approved by 2/3 of the members of the Assembly;
- 3\_ study the situation of the Association: spiritual, pastoral, financial, assignment of dues, etc.;
- 4\_ study themes in line with the spirit and the development of the Association;
- 5\_ approve pastoral plans.

Except for what concerns the revision of the Statutes, all decisions are taken by an absolute majority. If after two ballots the outcome remains equal, the Director General, through his vote, determines the outcome.

## **2\_ - The International Council**

17. This is composed of the Director General, the Sub-Director General, a General Councillor of the Daughters of Charity, the International Lay President and four lay members of the Association, elected by the General Assembly. They are the "major officials" (cf. Canon 318) of the Association. The International Council shall meet at least once a year. For a quorum, five members are necessary. An absolute majority is necessary before taking a decision.

It is convoked and presided over by the Lay President, or, in exceptional cases, by the Director General.

The functions of the International Council are to:

- 1\_ propose themes for reflection on the important aspect of the life and activities of the Association;
- 2\_ assure communication with and between the National Associations by letters, visits, and other possible means;
- 3\_ evaluate the realization of the projects approved by the preceding General Assembly;
- 4\_ prepare the following General Assembly;
- 5\_ study and approve the provisional budget and the annual accounts presented by the International Secretariat;

6\_ assure that the International Statutes are applied;

7\_ request from the Holy See, with the approval of the Director General, the dissolution of the Association;

8\_ attend to the liquidation of goods, according to the norms agreed by the same International Council.

18. *Election of the members:*

The Sub-Director General and the General Councillor of the Daughters of Charity are appointed by the Director General of the Association, after consulting their respective General Councils.

The lay members are elected by the General Assembly, giving appropriate attention to geographical representation.

19. *Term of office:*

The mandate of the Sub-Director General and of the General Councillor shall be for five years, with the possibility of being renamed for another mandate, but not beyond.

The President and the other four lay members shall exercise their office for five years, with the possibility of being reelected for five more years, but not beyond.

20. The powers of the International President, besides the specific functions in the International Council and the International General Assembly, are to:

1\_ convoke, in agreement with the Director General, the meetings of the General Assembly;

2\_ represent the International Association, together with the Director General or his delegate, at the National and Regional Meetings of the Association;

3\_ maintain relations with the other groups of the Vincentian Family and other lay movements;

4\_ plan his/her activities with the International Secretariat and the International Council.

**3\_ - The International Secretariat**

21. It will be composed of at least two persons, for whom this is their principal occupation; they will animate the programs outlined by the International Council and the General Assembly. They are appointed by the Director General, after consultation of the International Council.
22. *The term of office* is five years, with the possibility of being reappointed for another mandate.
23. *The functions of the International Secretariat are to:*
  - 1\_ promote the vitality of the Association;
  - 2\_ be the bond among the different Associations on the international level;
  - 3\_ provide information about the life of the Association;
  - 4\_ receive notification of the nominations at National level, as well as of each new association;
  - 5\_ organize and implement on the international level the meetings and other activities that the Director General or the International Council judge opportune in order to promote spiritually and apostolically the life of the Association;
  - 6\_ keep up-to-date the archives of the Association;
  - 7\_ present to the International Council a provisional budget at the beginning of the year and accounts at the end of the year.

## **II. National Level**

24. In order to erect a National Association, the approval of the Association and of its Statutes by the Director General is required.
25. The National Association has its own proper statutes in conformity with universal Canon Law and the present International Statutes.
26. The said National Statutes establish the particular norms appropriate for the country with regard to the organization of the members, their rights and obligations, and the apostolic work that the Association proposes to accomplish.



27. The National President, the National Director, and the Sister Advisor at the National Level are appointed in the manner determined by the proper statutes. Their appointments must be confirmed by the Director General.
28. The other appointments to the different offices of the Association are made in conformity with the Canon Law of the Universal Church and the proper statutes. The term of office of these officers is determined by the proper statutes.
29. The National Director shall inform the International Secretariat about the appointments made in his country.

### **III. Local Level**

30. In order to start a new group or center of the Association, the approbation of the National Director is required as well as the written consent of the competent ecclesial authority, in conformity with common and particular law.
31. The National Director shall notify the International Secretariat about the creation of every new association.

### **IDENTIFICATION SYMBOL**

32. The identification symbol of the International Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth is the Miraculous Medal.
33. Every National Association is free to adopt other symbols, in its own country, without suppressing the Miraculous Medal.

### **FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

34. The International Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth is a not-for-profit organization.
35. The International Secretariat gives an annual account of its income and expenses to the International Council.
36. In order that the International Secretariat can function properly, every National Association shall pay dues determined by the General Assembly.

### **DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION**

37. The International Council, with the consent of the Director General, can petition the Holy See for the dissolution of the Association.
38. The International Council shall assign the people to liquidate the Association's goods, according to the norms set by the same International Council.
39. The remaining goods, once all obligations have been fulfilled, shall be utilized for the poor of the place where the Association is situated.

#### **THE APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT OF THESE STATUTES**

40. The General Assembly can propose amendments or changes to these statutes and present them to the Holy See for approval.